
Interview: HRH Prince Hassan

Economic projects enhance peace effort

This interview with Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan was conducted by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach in Amman on Nov. 1:

EIR: Your Royal Highness, you said yesterday that it would be important to broaden one's view of developments beyond the Middle East. You spoke of eastern Europe and China. Are there plans to enlarge the MENA [Mideast North Africa summit] process, to enter into cooperation with ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations], ECO, etc.?



Prince Hassan: Yes, there was a representative of the U.N. secretary general yesterday talking about the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), an organization in place which we use as a point of reference, which is relevant to many in this region. There is the statement of the Arab League yesterday, saying, let's revitalize the institutions and develop the regional cooperation. There are also the new regional institutions, the Regional Economic Development Working Group (REDWG), etc. I see all these financial mechanisms coming together in a new regional debate which is economic for a change, rather than purely political. I think we are transcending national rivalries in this sense, and while addressing the political issues in the comprehensive discussion of the peace process, this building process is also addressing the why's and wherefore's of putting substance into decisions. The fact that we cannot absorb all these parameters in one statement, should not depress us.

EIR: What about concrete plans to link up with the Eurasian transportation grid which is being built for the Central Asian republics, Russia, and into China?

Prince Hassan: Indeed, I think the idea of transportation links—the idea of an electricity grid in this region by 1997 which would include Syria, Jordan, Israel, Egypt—all of this is on line. The time has come when the gestation and maturity of these projects will coincide with enhancing the other processes as well.

Of course, the absence of Syria and Lebanon on the one

hand, and the absence of Iraq, of Iran from a broader regional debate, for whatever reason—I don't want to comment on the reasons and restate our position on each of these issues—of course, we need a comprehensive peace, we need the participation of the Iraqi people. . . .

But I think we are moving gradually, in different circles, concentric circles, I mean, toward a broader understanding of complementarity in the Arab, Muslim, and regional sense, in the eastern Mediterranean sense. Don't forget our commitment to Barcelona and the Euro-Med, for example: the idea of a trade hub in the region, which of course, involves so many countries. Let's not forget the outside world; there are 63 nationalities here, who are looking at the intermediation of this region between Europe, on the one hand, and the Western Hemisphere and East Asia, on the other. There is a lot of good news.

Interview: Enzo Ferrari

We are proposing great infrastructure projects

Mr. Ferrari is the Managing Director of Gas Supply, Finance, and Administration of the Italian firm SNAM/ENI. He was interviewed by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach in Amman on Nov. 1.

EIR: ENI has presented the Levante Gas Project, to extend the Peace Pipeline to the Near East region. What concrete possibility exists that such an ambitious project may be realized?

Ferrari: We want to demonstrate that the distances, which are extremely important for a gas project, are not so great as to impede realization. Even the three alternatives—by land, by sea, and by alternating the two—in the end involve the same costs to carry an energy source from the point of production to its potential market. We know that Turkey, which is experiencing tremendous industrial growth and also growth in energy needs, is seeking alternative sources of gas. It is looking to Russia, to many areas, to make a match in terms of diversification of gas sources, to reach the year 2000. To the extent that Egyptian production of gas will yield an adequate volume, to begin these projects, the distance to Turkey will not prevent getting it there. At the same time, the study of a land route, as we have learned from our experience in Europe, makes it possible to generate the growth of gas industries. But all this is possible *only* in the context of peace. If there is peace, if it continues to develop, we can implement these projects, therefore, we're thinking of starting.